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The Newsletter of Region One

Volume 4, No. 3

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Commissioner Speaks Up On Hunter Ethics

FWP Commission Chairman Stan Meyer learned humility early in his professional career.

"I was a freshman at Iowa State University in agricultural journalism, the son of an Iowa farmer, and very proud of our role as the bread basket of the world," said Meyer. "I walked into the classroom that first day and sat down with many other students who had a similar background. We expected to be praised for our role in agriculture."

Instead, the older, well-respected professor surprised the young students. "I'll never forget how deflated I felt," said Meyer. "The professor looked out the window and said, 'Poor Iowa farmers. They're the corn producer for the world, work dawn to dusk, but they put so much into their backs that there's nothing left for their heads.' I knew right then that I had a lot to learn about life."

Meyer, now a 37-year veteran in the communications business, has put those skills to work as Chairman of the FWP Commission. In his role he over-

sees the five-member Commission in the process to set hunting and fishing seasons, and other aspects of fish and wildlife management.

"I consider myself a citizen's representative to FWP on fish and wildlife issues," said Meyer. "I believe I can help FWP in the two-way process of communication between the agency and the public." Meyer added that he would like to work on improving the current method of including public comment during the regulations-setting process.

"The public meetings we conduct now during the season-setting process sometimes break down into a defense of FWP recommendations," he said. "I'd like to see some creative thinking on how to restructure the process."

A life-time hunter, Meyer is particularly concerned about North

America's hunting heritage and the image of hunters.

"We need to police our own ranks," he said. "Hunters need to understand that we are operating in a fast-changing environment. In these days of legal wranglings and heightened awareness, what hunters do is important to the non-hunting public."

Although FWP has several training programs beyond the basic hunter education courses, Meyer calls for more work in this area. "I would like to see a program of advanced hunter training where graduates would receive a certification. That way when a hunter asks a landowner for permission to hunt, he or she can show the landowner some indication of responsibility."

Another priority mentioned by
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FWP Commission

Members:

Stan Meyer, Chairman, Great Falls (453-0144)
Elaine Allestad, Rancher, Big Timber (932-5822)
Charles R. Decker, Logging Contractor, Libby (293-6465)
James D. Rector, Vice Chairman, Attorney, Glasgow, (228-4385)
David W. Simpson, Company Executive, Hardin, (342-5241)

Function:

The FWP Commission serves as the liaison between the public and FWP. Please call any of the Commission members to give your views on FWP issues.

Commission Meets:

Monthly, usually in Helena, please call Carolyn Linden, Commission Secretary, 444-7826, for specific dates; public attendance encouraged.



A LIFE-TIME HUNTER, FWP Commissioner Stan Meyer has "cut at least one big game tag in Montana for the last 37 years." Here Meyer (left) is shown with a moose he harvested in FWP Region One. On the right is Libby guide Bob Drake.



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Hunter Education Field Courses

Most Hunter Education Instructors believe a field course is a vital part of the overall program to educate youths about hunter responsibility and safety. In fact, most instructors think it's the most important part.

"The field course and live firing gives students actual hands-on training with real firearms in real situations," said Kalispell area Lead Instructor Dan Atkinson. "You can teach principles in the classroom, but that's an individual experience for them. In the field course students must pay attention to others in their group and demonstrate safety and responsibility." Atkinson added that the field course gives instructors an excellent chance to observe students in real situations. With the help of nearly two dozen instructors, Atkinson organizes a six-station field course for upwards of 250 students in the spring and in the fall.



WATER SAFETY (top photo) is the emphasis at FWP Warden Brian Somers' station of the Kalispell area Hunter Education Course. Most instructors feel that the field exercises are the most important part of Hunter Education Courses.

BLACK POWDER TECHNIQUES are described by Instructor Norm Nelson as Junior Instructor Shawna Hawk (left) looks on. Nearly two dozen instructors and about 250 students participate in the field course in the spring and the fall.

Whitefish area Co-Lead Instructor Tony Kastella believed so strongly in the importance of live firing that he devoted hundreds of hours to raise \$5,000 for the purchase of high-quality, .22 rifles and accessories for student use.

"Live firing makes a tremendous difference in student confidence," said Kastella. "It not only gives them a chance to put their classroom learning into practice, it allows us to see problems with their shooting skills that we can work on."

More than 1,200 students have passed through the live firing program set up by Kastella and others; it is widely recognized as perhaps the best live-firing exercise in the state. Each student works on sight picture, dominant eye,



CROSSING A LOG with a rifle requires the two-handed rifle carry demonstrated by Instructor Dale Summerfield. In the six-station field course students get a chance to show the safety and responsibility they have learned in the classroom.

CONTRIBUTORS TO THE RIFLE FUND for the Whitefish/Columbia Falls Hunter Education Program:

Kastella Family, Vince Ciciarri, American Legion Post 108, American Timber, Mike Higgins, F.M. Ricker, VFW Post 276, Whitefish Credit Union, Ed Gilliland, Dr. Willis Loveall, Charlie and Sue Abell, Western Building, Pete Forthofer, Remington Arms, Rita Hanson, Plum Creek Timber, Inc.

Develop Youths' Skills and Safety

and fires up to 30 rounds of ammunition from various positions.

The indoor firing range is set up at the Whitefish Rifle and Pistol Club. Co-Lead Instructor Leonard Howke leads the companion outdoor field exercise on the Club grounds. The Columbia Falls area instructors led by Paul Murphy team up with the Whitefish instructors for maximum benefit.

Kalispell area Lead Bowhunter Education Instructor Roger Allick has made a field course a priority for his students. Allick teaches with about a half-dozen other instructors, including his wife, Pat, to provide quality training on blood trailing, bowhunting safety, use of tree stands,



INSTRUCTOR Dale Farnes (top photo) shows student Steve Smith the proper way to hoist a bow into a tree stand.

THE 1994 WOMEN'S HUNTER EDUCATION CLASS also went through the Whitefish live firing and field exercise.

vital area location and other items. In course evaluations, students often mention the field exercise as the most valuable portion of the course. Dan Moore, Brad Borden and others who also teach in the Kalispell area include field training in their programs.

Other bowhunter education lead instructors, including Mike Shepard of Columbia Falls, Richard Parker of Whitefish, Rich Hjort of Libby, and Don Flesvig of Plains emphasize field training in their courses, as well.

Putting on a field course for hundreds of students takes a big commitment, but the instructors wouldn't have it any other way. The quality of field courses is one reason why Montana's program is one of the highest ranked in North America. All hunters owe Montana's volunteer instructors a big round of thanks! 🦌



DEMONSTRATING BLOODTRAILING methods (top photo) is Instructor Matt Riley as Instructor Bob Edwards (right) and the students watch.

THE WHITEFISH RIFLE AND PISTOL CLUB Indoor Range provides the site for Whitefish Instructor Tony Kastella to work on students' firing techniques.

Commissioner...

(Continued from Page 1)

Meyer is youth mentoring. "If we miss the chance to introduce our youth to hunting traditions, those traditions will disappear. I feel very strongly about maintaining our public hunting opportunities, and youth education is integral to that. Think of it this way: If you knock on a landowner's door with a youth as a hunting partner, it sends the right message. And it may even increase your chances of getting permission to hunt."

Meyer's strong feelings come from a childhood filled with hunting and fishing experiences. "I stalked fox when I was 10 years old with a .410 shotgun, and fished the upper Mississippi with my uncle before that."

Meyer lives in Great Falls with Jane, his wife of 38 years. The Meyers raised two children, Carol (34) and Sara (36). Meyer says his family is 100 percent behind his efforts on the Commission.

"This is a job I relish," he said. 🐾

State Parks Are Ready For Visitors

FWP Region One's 11 state parks are now in full operation. Contact FWP for more information on campgrounds, facilities and activities available.

Flathead Lake This park's six units provide public access for boating, swimming and camping to the east and west shores of Flathead Lake and Wild Horse Island.

Wild Horse Island Wild Horse Island, part of Flathead Lake State Park, is located in the southern part of Flathead Lake near Big Arm and is accessible only by boat. This primitive area has been a landmark in the Flathead Valley; no camping, only day use.

Lone Pine A visitor center, picnic area, group picnic shelter and overlook interpretive trail aid the park visitor in gaining an appreciation of NW Montana's natural resources.

Whitefish Lake Whitefish Lake consists of a mature forest which makes this site very pleasant for overnight camping and day-use. Boating, swimming and fishing can be enjoyed the entire season. There are no RV hook-ups or handicap facilities.

Logan This campground is located on Middle Thompson Lake near the Thompson Chain of Lakes; 41 units are available, some with RV hookups. Showers are also available. The area provides boating, swimming and fishing.

Lake Mary Ronan Situated on the east side of the lake with often excellent kokanee salmon fishing; trails into the surrounding area abound in honeysuckle, clematis, huckleberries and Oregon grape. There are no RV hook-ups or handicap facilities. This is a primitive park.

Thompson Falls A mature conifer forest makes the site cool and private. Campsites afford a good river front view along the Clark Fork. The park has drinking water, vault toilets, two camping loops and two covered picnic areas. There are no RV hook-ups or handicap facilities. This is a primitive park. 🐾

INSIDE TRACKS is published by Region One



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Wildlife & Parks**

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